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ABSTRACT

Wyoming is a state of great natural beauty with only five people per square mile and a unique way of life that deserves to be preserved. The economy, though, is almost totally dependent on energy extraction, an area that has not done well of late. The state's small population makes "boutique" products and services not very profitable, and efforts to diversify Wyoming's economy into "tech" manufacturing and high end services have not been successful. The schools are doing well according to the high school graduation rates, standardized test scores, the low percentages of at-risk children, and the state's relatively stable family structures; however, if energy prices remain depressed, the rates of family pathology are likely to increase as they are likely to do when there is an increase in unemployment. The higher education system in Wyoming is simple: a single university and seven community colleges. College attendance rates are reasonably high; most residents go to college in Wyoming where the educational costs are somewhat of a bargain. Several more years, though, of economic declines could push the higher education system to some dangerous decisions due to the inflexibilty of financial resources. (19 references) (KM)

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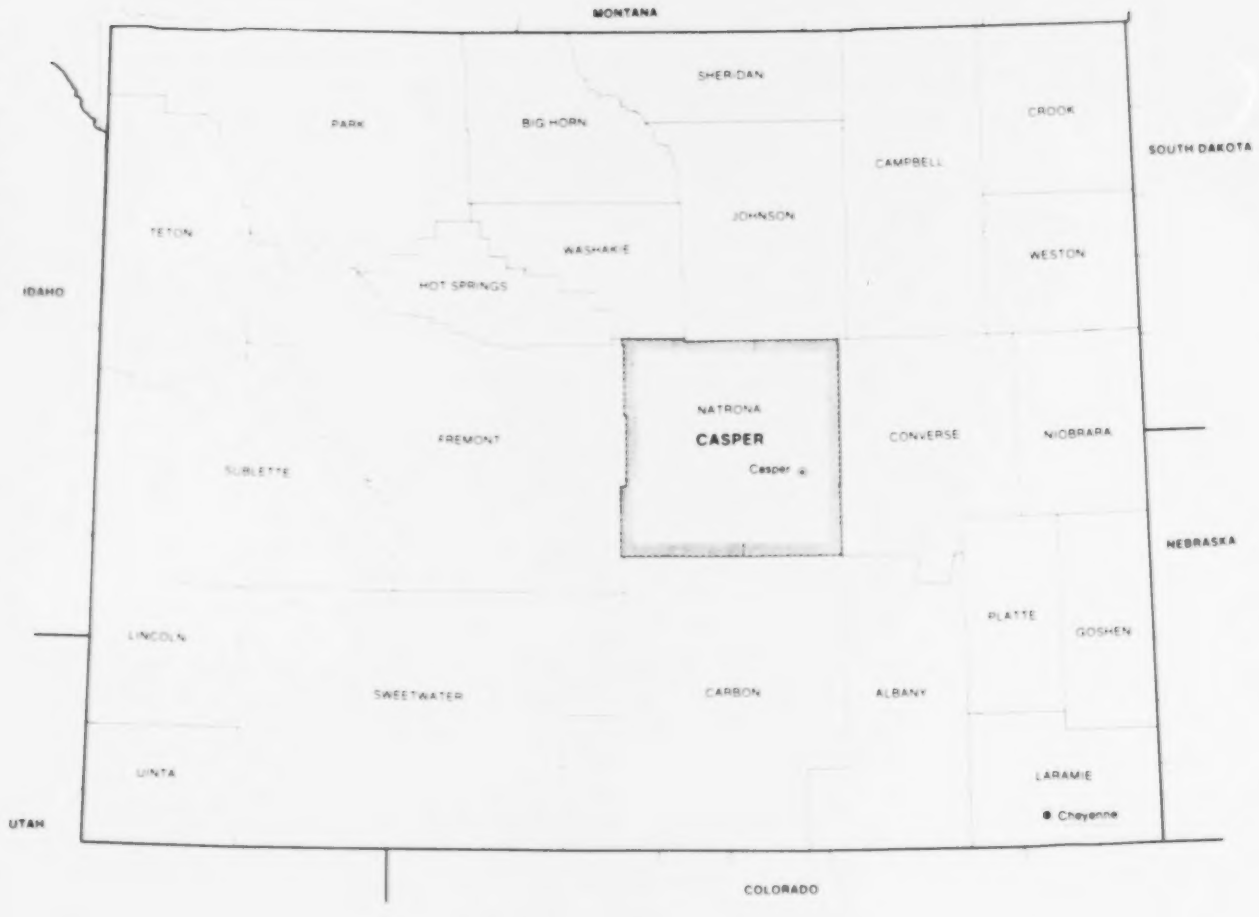

THE STATE AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

BY HAROLD L. HODGKINSON

EA 021 770

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Decisions about what data to use, and what interpretations of the data are selected, are the responsibility of the author.

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COVER NOTE:

This unusual map of Wyoming shows how the state looks demographically. Its one metropolitan area, Casper, stands out in lonely splendor. Counties of Teton and Park suggest the tourism that supports the northwest area of the state. Lots of land and very few people give the state its particular quality. "People maps" like this one are becoming increasingly useful to politicians and marketers of products and services—even to educators!

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WYOMING:
THE STATE AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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WYOMING—THE STATE AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

For most Americans, Wyoming is a state to pass through, with stops in the Tetons or Yellowstone. Most of the residents seem to like that arrangement just fine. (Remember that there are only 5 people per square mile in Wyoming, compared to New Jersey's 1,027!) The climate can be severe, the work is hard. One is reminded of the line from Yeats—"This is no country for old men." As with all mountain states, Wyoming's people are a fiercely independent lot. A statewide meeting in Montana or Wyoming (the author has spoken at both) is more like a town meeting in Des Moines—virtually everybody in the state knows everybody. A statewide school administrators meeting will find most of the audience knowing the others by their first names *without* looking at their name tags!

Wyoming's future is almost totally linked to energy, in that the state sits on some of the most formidable resources in the world in terms of coal, gas and oil. (Some have estimated that if we had to, we could meet all of the nation's energy needs for a century by digging all of the coal out of Wyoming, which would not make people very happy in West Virginia and Kentucky.) No state has a greater dependence on energy income than Wyoming. Given the past, present and likely future of energy prices, Wyoming's economy may continue to resemble a roller-coaster, zooming from boom (as in the Seventies) to bust (as in the Eighties). During the boom Seventies the population grew from 332,000 to 470,000, up about 40 percent. During the bust of 1980-1987 the population increased 4 percent. Workers attracted to booms often stay on during busts, with little work for them to do.

Although there is talk of a diversifying economy, manufacturing is a tough sell, given transportation costs. Even ranching (and both Montana and Wyoming are proud of the fact that each state has far more cattle than people) has a limited amount of expansion in that each animal needs a vast range to survive on sparse grasslands. In addition, about half of Wyoming is owned by the federal government, and energy leases are heavily owned by "absentee landlords" who live on the East or West Coast. To get more benefit for state residents, Wyoming, like Montana, passed a mineral severance tax in the late Sixties. Today this severance tax is a major source of revenue for state government.

There is considerable potential for the further expansion of chemical extraction and refinement in Southwestern Wyoming, not in energy but in sulfur, soda ash (trona) and other processing chemicals. Presently, large orders from Asian companies in businesses like window glass are being received by several companies, while Chevron has a large fertilizer plant in Rock Springs. Uranium is also plentiful.

The only part of the economy with growth potential is tourism, although the jobs it produces are usually not well paid. Again, growth in tourism produces some declines in quality of life, as interpreted by the right to live 50 miles away from the next ranch. Rapid increases in dude ranches and accompanying fast food restaurants, gas stations, bars, etc., may not be a good bargain for Wyoming residents. The limited amount of manufacturing is dependent on the manufacture of drilling and extractive equipment for the energy industry. Soil levels are neither deep nor rich enough to promote much in the way of agriculture. (It is possible that as the country has more garbage, from nuclear to coffee grounds, the ante will be raised in states like Wyoming, Montana and Utah to allow more of their vast lands to be used as dump sites. Eventually, the fees will be high enough to attract the attention of any political leader, although the trade-offs could be very serious.)

Most Wyomingites have made their peace with the environment or have moved on. There is a single culture to the state, complete with gun racks on pick-up trucks, hunting for food not just for sport, very close personal friendships plus the independence and distrust of all forms of big government we have mentioned. For those who like *only* vast stretches of shockingly beautiful wilderness, this is the best place in the nation to live.

Let's look now at some state comparison data to get a better sense of how Wyoming fits in.

This statistical portrait reveals a state with the smallest population spread over a large land mass with few people in each square mile. The population expanded rapidly

A WYOMING PROFILE

1970 Population	332,416
1980 Population	469,557
1987 Population	490,000 (50th)
Population Change, 1980-87	+ 4.4% (28th—U.S. +7.4%)
People per square mile	5 (49th—U.S. 69)
1980 Black Population	3,364 (0.7%)
1988 Black Population (est.)	4,000
Hispanic Population, 1980	24,499 (5.2%, 10,605 in 1970)
Asian Population, 1980	1,969 (0.4%)
Native American Population plus other, 1980	17,736 (3.8%)
1986 Persons under age 18	30.5% (5th—U.S. 26.2%)
1986 Persons over age 65	8.4% (48th—U.S. 12.1%)
1986 Living in Metro Areas	28.8% (46th—U.S. 76.8%)
1986 Birth Rate	18.4 (9th—U.S. 15.8)
1986 Births to Teenage Mothers	11.6% (26th—U.S. 12.7%)
1986 Births to Unmarried Mothers	13.3% (47th—U.S. 22%)
1986 Abortions per 1,000 women	7.9 (50th—U.S. 28.0)
1985 Infant Mortality	12.2 (6th—U.S. 10.6)
1986 Crime Rate per 100,000	4,357 (32nd—U.S. 5,480)
1986 Prisoners per 100,000	170.6 (28th—U.S. 226.8)
Prisoners Change, 1980-86	+62.8% (28th—U.S. + 65.7%)
1985 General Expenditures per capita	$4,166 (2nd—U.S. $2,313)
Food Stamp Eligibles, 1986	55.2 per 1,000 (38th-U.S. 78.9)
Manufacturing Jobs, 1980-86	−16.7% (45th—U.S. -6.4%)
Service Jobs, 1980-86	+9.3% (50th—U.S. +29.1%)
Personal Income Change, 1985-86	−1.7% (50th—U.S. +6.3%)
1986 Motor Vehicles per 1,000	1,000 (1st—U.S. 732)
1986 Accidental Deaths per 100,000	28.4 (4th—U.S. 19.3)
Retail Sales per capita 1982-86	+37.5% (18th—U.S. +33.3%)
Housing Starts, change 1985-86	−29.4% (44th—U.S. + 3.6%)

during the boom days of the 1970's and has grown little during the 1980's. The state's minority populations are well below the national percentages, especially for blacks. Comparatively large Hispanic and Native American populations are present and growing, but total minority populations are only about ten percent of the state's population. (Poverty problems of Native Americans are very severe, and often ignored.) The population is very young, leading to a high fertility rate and very few elderly citizens for which to provide services. Except for minorities, young people tend not to be born "at risk" (poverty, illegitimacy, teen-age mothers) compared to the nation, where one of every five children are born out of marriage. However, continued high rates of unemployment will clearly increase the number of at-risk kids. Most people do not live in metropolitan areas, but neither are they truly in ranches 50 miles apart. Rather, they clump in small villages that they usually call "cities."

Family life is quite "conventional" with a small percentage of women in the work force, a small number of births to teenage mothers and to unmarried mothers, as well as very low abortion rates. However, the infant death rate is high, due in part to the shortage of doctors spread out over the state's wide area. It may be that many citizens go out of state for medical services, including abortions.

Although there are many stories about robberies and murder, crime rates are actually quite low, and the increase in prisoners of about 60 percent since 1980 is about at the national average. Dollars of government expenditure per capita are quite high, especially when considering the small number and percentage eligible for Food Stamp programs. (A very large share of these dollars come from severance and other non-personal income taxes.)

In terms of jobs, the state's record has been alarming since 1980. Wyoming lost a higher percentage of manufacturing jobs and gained a smaller percentage of service jobs than did almost every other state. The state ranked 50th in gain in personal income. On the other hand, Wyoming leads the nation in motor vehicles per capita—*there is one car for every person in the state, even for children and others who can't drive them!* It seems that almost everyone owns a car and a truck. Because of this high use of cars, guns and alcohol, Wyoming has a very high rate of accidental deaths. While retail sales seem to be holding, housing starts took a nose dive in recent years, consistent with the sudden stop in inmigration. Partly because of the sharp decline in people moving in, and the severance tax already mentioned, there seems to be considerable amounts of government money per capita, even though personal income has not increased. After enjoying very low rates of unemployment during the boom years, the 1986 rate was hovering around 9 percent, eighth highest in the nation.

Wyoming's only metro area is Casper, comprising Natrona County located in the central part of the state very near the huge Teapot Dome oil reserve. With fewer than 66,000 residents, Casper is the smallest of the 100 metro areas in the U.S., and has declined almost 4 percent each year from 1983 to 1987. Jobs have declined over 5 percent a year in the same period. The labor force is currently about 32,300, the smallest of any metro area. During 1987, Casper had the sixth highest unemployment rate of any metro. The metro is 96.5 percent white. With the possible exception of potatoes, Casper seems prepared to dig anything else out of the ground and sell it, if only a buyer could be found. Until some energy pricing goes up, there is little to do. Although it is not a metro area, Cheyenne is a significant Wyoming city, with a number of government workers and an Air Force base. However, the employment base is unlikely to expand.

In addition, the jobs generated by tourism are usually not well paying. In some ways, they dominate the Wyoming economy:

WHO DOES WHAT IN WYOMING?

Financial Managers	500
Engineers, Total	2,900
Doctors	500
Veterinarians	100
Lawyers	800
Computer Programmers	200
* * * *	
Fast Food Workers	10,900
Janitors	6,800
Laborers, Equipment Cleaners	10,500

(Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Winter, 1986)

Yet, there is a bright side to Casper and Wyoming's future. First, it is very likely, given our own tendency to buy gas guzzlers during periods of energy glut, that energy prices will go up again sometime in the next decade, regardless of OPEC's ability to get its act together. (Even this kind of prediction makes the author uneasy—demographic trends are so much more predictable!) In addition, the Casper work force is very well-educated; virtually all adults have a high school diploma, and 40 percent have attended college. A large percentage of jobs in energy extraction, plus the financial service, business service and other support businesses, require considerable knowledge. In addition, Casper is well-situated in terms of air, rail and highway access. Being basically the only city in the state, retail and wholesale trade in Casper is quite high (mostly in the *city* of Casper), even with recent declines. The metro has good access, very high quality of life in terms of recreation, museums, and two institutions of higher education, while state and local individual tax rates, as well as housing costs, are among the lowest in the nation.

The problem with this bright side, which applies equally to Casper and to the state, is the lack of diversification. As long as this continues—and there is no evidence to the contrary—the metro and state will be dependent on one industry and its supporting operations. Even with another boom in the future, it is easy to predict another bust after that. Few businesses will want to locate in an area with that much volatility. Rather than actively creating and protecting its future, Wyoming seems to be sitting around waiting for something wonderful to happen.

Let's now look at how the Wyoming educational system fits into this context.

Wyoming's Educational System

As one might expect, the educational data for the state reflect the tendencies we have already noted.

If one were to look for an ideal "recipe" for a state's educational system, it might have these characteristics: small classes, high dollar investment in each student, good teacher salaries, equal funding responsibility between state and local governments, low levels of youth poverty, small communities in which kids can't easily "fall between the cracks."

These characteristics are typical of Wyoming's educational system, and the results, in terms of graduation rates (10th highest in the nation in 1987) and performance on the ACT, are nothing short of stellar. In addition, these graduation data from the U.S. Department of Education have taken into account interstate migration. (The only negative interpretation might be that with very high rates of unemployment, few young people will leave school, as there is nothing for them to do.) In addition, little is known about the performance of those children who are minority, in poverty households, not living with both parents, etc.

Although ACT scores do not tell the whole story (62.7 percent of Wyoming's graduates were tested, leaving 38 percent for whom the results are not useful), it is still very impressive that Wyoming was *first* in the "high end" students who score over 26, as well as 4th in mean scores. Having fairly stable families and a low level of childhood poverty undoubtedly helped. To the degree that money was involved, these results were accomplished more by left-over energy money than by heavy personal income tax dollars.

Lynn Simons, Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction, has developed some excellent programs at the state level to reward high achieving schools (the "Superschools" program), as well as some very useful advice to local schools on how to prevent "at-risk" young people from leaving school. One would expect the *number* of at-risk kids to be small in our smallest state population, but the *percentages* are low as well. It might have been useful to present more information about the problems of being Hispanic or Native American or poor, in that these are major determinants of youth failure in the state. The materials also recognize that alcoholism and suicide are problems that can affect *any* family member. But the material is well done, and it is always wise to stay ahead of youth problems whenever possible.

Here is an oddity. We have found a state in which the

WYOMING SCHOOL PROFILE

Fall, 1970 Enrollment	87,000 (49th)	
Fall, 1982 Enrollment	107,000 (46th)	
Fall, 1987 Enrollment	98,455 (48th)	
Enrollment Change, 1980-85	+5.1% (5th in growth)	
Enrollment Change, 1986-87	−2.48% (51st in growth)	
Pupil-Teacher Ratio, 1986	14:4 (1:15 in 1981)	
Teacher Salary, Fall, 1987	$28,103 (12th-U.S. $26,551)	
Per Pupil Expenditure, 1987	$ 6,229 (3rd-U.S. $3,970)	
School funding:	**1981**	**1987**
Federal	6.6%	2.6%
State	29.1%	41.1%
Local	64.3%	56.3%
Private School Enrollment, Fall, 1980	3,036	
Catholic School Enrollment, Fall, 1980	1,387	
Percent of 1978 9th graders graduating in 1982	72.4% (25th-U.S. 69%)	
Percent of 1982 9th graders graduating in 1986	81.2% (10th-U.S. 71%)	
Per Capita Income, 1986	$12,781 (35th U.S. $14,641)	
Percent Poverty, ages 5-17	7.5% (51st including D.C., U.S. 15.3%)	
Minority Enrollment, 1987	9.7% (39th-U.S. 30%) Hispanic 6.4%, Native American 1.8%, Black 0.9%, Asian 0.7%	
ACT Mean Score, 1982(caution!)	19.2	
ACT Mean Score, 1987(caution!)	19.9 (4th of 28 states in ACT)	
Percent Scoring 26 and Over, 1987	17.8% (1st of 28 states)	

educational system is clearly outperforming the economy! There are several factors leading to this happy turn of events. First, the age demographics of the population suggest that the state can concentrate resources on education to an unusual degree, as the number of elderly is low, and they often require expensive services.

In addition, the increase in prisoners in the state has been comparatively low. No person is as expensive as a prisoner, by the way. While we are currently spending about $3,700 per public school student in the U.S., we average $23,000 per prisoner in our jails! (Imagine what schools we could run if we had $23,000 per student.) The relationship between the two is important, in that 80 percent of all prisoners in the nation are high school dropouts. Obviously, if all young people graduated from high school we could not shut our prisons entirely, but a 20 percent reduction in prisoners would free up an enormous amount of capital for other purposes. Head Start is one program that has already demonstrated that it has the ability to reduce prison populations, as well as welfare recipients, while increasing the number of high school graduates and college students, as well as employed, taxpaying citizens! Indeed, a dollar spent in Head Start saves $7 in later services that do not need to be provided—like jails.

Before we allow Wyomingites to wallow in self-congratulations, it might be advisable to survey the future to some degree. Until energy prices come back—and that may be a number of years—the state's number and percentage of children at risk can go up very rapidly. In addition, the *intensity* of poverty is likely to increase in a state whose economy is shutting down ever more jobs. Minority students, although a small percentage of the total, could expand very quickly if white parents move out, leaving "landlocked" minority populations. In addition, continuing high unemployment and its attendant sense of futility could begin to reduce the apparently high quality of family life, with increases in violence, drug usage, suicides and divorces. Again, because the state's population is small, you really need *every* kid to succeed. It is unlikely that the 17,000 Native Americans in Wyoming are truly fulfilling their potential—this is the most at risk, and most ignored, population in the state. A small increase in social pathology can have large consequences in Wyoming.

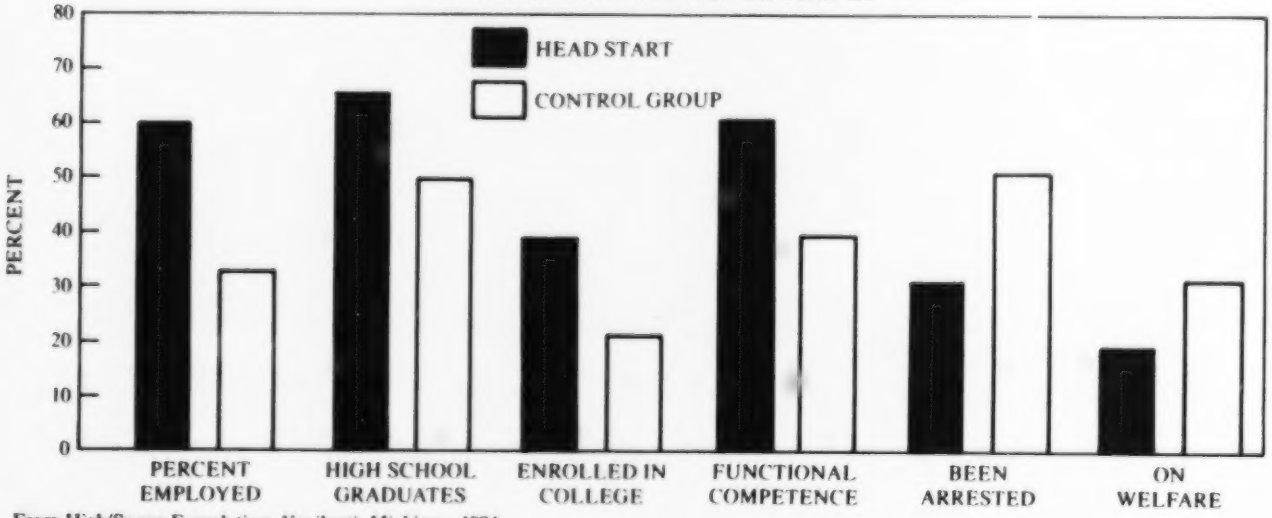
Because the educational system seems to be ahead of the state, it may be opportune to suggest that the educational system can be a leader in bringing the state toward economic independence. We will so argue in the final section of this report.

WYOMING'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In a big state with few people, how do you make sure that every citizen has access to higher education? One answer is, you don't. Wyoming has only one four-year institution (the University of Wyoming in Laramie) and if you want a BA, you have to go to *it*. Is this short-sighted? Yes and no—the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in its special Almanac issue in September 1988 said, "Wyoming . . . is the envy of some of its financially strapped neighbors, which must stretch their higher-education dollars to support multiple-university systems. In rough budget years, higher education officials elsewhere in the West have been heard to lament that Wyoming was smart." However, excellent cooperation between the University and community colleges has resulted in the delivery of many four-year programs, expecially in nursing and elementary education, at a number of sites around the state.

However, when times are tough (as they currently are in Wyoming), the continuing necessity for increased funding of higher education can become a major problem. In that situation, it is easier to maintain funding to *one* university than to a complex system of them, supporting the Chronicle's position. Let's take a look at the higher education system in numbers:

HEAD START CHILDREN AT AGE 19



From High/Scope Foundation, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1984

WYOMING HIGHER EDUCATION

Public, four-year institutions	1
Public, two-year institutions	7
Private, four-year institutions	0
Private, two-year institutions	1
Total	9
Vocational institutions	14
Enrollment, public four-year, 1986–87	9,980
Enrollment, public two-year, 1986–87	13,755
Enrollment, private two-year, 1986–87	622
Total	24,357
Women Enrolled	52.5%
Full-time Enrollment	58.0%
Minority Student Enrollment	4.9%
Enrollment Change, 1976—1986	+ 27.0%
Public 4 year tuition and fees (average)	$778
Public 4 year room charge	$1,088
Public 2 year tuition and fees (average)	$516
Expenditures for higher education	$203,307,000
State funds for higher education operating costs	$114,188,000

(All Data from *Almanac*, Chronicle of Higher Education, September, 1988.)

Given the fact that Wyoming's schools graduate about 6,000 students a year, the percentage who do go on to college would seem to be reasonably high. In addition, tuition and fees are certainly proportionately low, which probably is why 76 percent of Wyoming's residents who go on to higher education go to college in their own state. (As a member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Wyoming citizens can take advantage of reciprocal arrangements with member states.) Faculty salaries, at $36,000 in the University and $27,000 in community colleges for full time positions, are on the low side but border on the reasonable for a small state. The system also seems to be attractive to the state's small minority populations. However, only 24 percent of faculty are female at the public institutions, and no data are available on minority faculty.

The state's community colleges do provide for some regional diversification of higher education programs, but given the ambiguities of the state's economy and work force, it is hard to see how coherent the community college curricula can be, and how well people can be prepared for jobs which may not exist. In addition, it seems likely that in times of financial distress, the community colleges would be under pressure to absorb heavy financial reductions.

In sum, it would appear that at least a few years of hard times are ahead for Wyoming higher education. Public school funding contains a large share of local dollars, which can counter state fiscal declines due in part to severance dollar decline. Higher education has only the (unpopular) option of raising tuition as a revenue enhancer. Although the initial pressure will be on the community colleges, the ripples will quickly move to the University of Wyoming. At 7,200 feet above sea level, the University claims to be the highest university in the nation, but that is unlikely to be as true of dollars as it is of altitude.

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

Wyoming is a state with wonderful scenery, a way of life which borders on the unique and should be preserved, and an economy which is almost totally dependent on energy extraction. Small populations make "boutique" products and services not very profitable, and efforts to diversify the state's economy into "tech" manufacturing and high-end services have not been successful. Yet Wyoming citizens are young and well-educated, a very important state resource. The following might offer some cohesion to efforts to enhance the state's future:

1. Presently, there is the chance that a significant chemical industry can be created in southwest Wyoming where large amounts of sulfur, soda ash and other chemicals related to glassmaking are located. Asian nations are likely markets. There is only one additional part of the Wyoming economy that can be intentionally expanded at present, and that is tourism. In the world, there will be almost one billion new members of the middle class (defined as having discretionary income) by the year 2000. For most of them, America is the "nation of nations" and represents a romantic attraction. But when it comes to cowboys, the fascination of most peoples of the world knows no bounds. Large numbers of international tourists are bicoastal—probably fifty fly over Wyoming for every one that stops. Even though the jobs created by tourism (hotel maids, janitors, fast food workers, bus drivers) do not pay well, there are related businesses that do. (In Montana, one enterprising firm is now making custom tailored cowboy hats, starting at $300. No cowboy could possibly afford a hat at that price, but an infinite number of Asian tourists can pay that much and will.)
2. Related to a major push in upper-middle class international tourism should be an effort to promote small business starts owned by Wyoming citizens. The Small Business Development Center at Casper Community College, with locations at the other higher education institutions as well, has some potential in this area. Serious planning efforts should get underway to exploit the business opportunities which lie upstream and downstream of tourism, from financial and business services to museum and exhibition planning. Through time, this strategy could provide new and fulfilling opportunities for businesses owned by Wyoming citizens. It is vital that the state develop its own businesses to eliminate the previous ills of absentee landlords.
3. If the economic crunch continues, which is likely for the next several years, Wyoming is very likely to see an increase in family pathology, from violence against family members to major drug use by high school students to suicides. It is crucial that Wyoming's schools work to prevent that from happening to the state's young people. It is commonly known that high rates of unemployment can contribute to the situations we have just mentioned. Better linkage of the schools with other youth serving agencies and more effective liaison between schools and parents should be established now to forestall future problems. In addition, the excellent materials coming from the Superintendent of Education's office should be the basis of a statewide effort to hold down the increases in children at risk. In addition, present poverty and minority youth could be better targetted.
4. In Wyoming particularly, the schools and community colleges need to work together to develop some new programs of vocational training, starting at the junior high or middle school years and coordinated through the community colleges for advancement and retraining, particularly around tourism-related activity. Effective programs on starting small businesses could be an important factor in such programs. The result could be better trained workers as well as an increase in small businesses that had a good chance of succeeding. (Most new jobs come not from Fortune Five Hundred Companies, which lose more jobs than they create. Rather they come from newly organized small businesses with 20 or so employees.) There are excellent examples of states that have increased tourism income without selling out to developers, maintaining natural beauty and a high quality of life for residents. These should be the models for Wyoming's future.

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17. Wyoming Department of Education, *Children at Risk: Roadblocks to Achieving Potential*, 1987.

18. Documents from various school districts describing policies on at-risk children, dated June-August, 1988.

19. Wyoming Department of Education, *Program Approval Standards*, June 29, 1988.

WYOMING—SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS

Wyoming is a state of great natural beauty, five people per square mile, and an economy almost completely dependent on energy extraction, an area that has not done well of late. Rather than hustling around to guarantee that Wyoming's future will *not* be dependent on energy interests alone, there is a tendency for Wyoming's people to be fatalistic—they seem to hang around, waiting for something wonderful to happen. They are very dedicated to a way of life that stresses individualism, maintaining the environment, hunting and fishing for food as well as sport, pickup trucks and rifle racks. A state meeting is like a small town meeting in most other states—everyone in Wyoming seems to know everyone else. Friendships are deep and long lasting.

The schools are doing very well in most measures—high school graduation rates, ACT scores, low percentages of children at risk, relatively stable families, high amounts of money spent per child (even though a lot of this comes from energy severance taxes, not personal income). However, if energy prices stay depressed as they are likely to do for awhile, the state has no back-up economy, and rates of family pathology are likely to increase as they generally do in unemployed households. Additional efforts need to be made to support poverty and minority children.

The higher education system in Wyoming is simple—one four-year degree granting university and seven community colleges. Rates of college-going seem reasonably high, and most residents go to college in their own state, where college costs are something of a bargain. Several more years of economic declines could push the higher education system to some dangerous decisions, due to the inflexibility of financial resources.

Some serious efforts need to be made to diversify the state's economic base, including the encouragement of new small businesses owned and operated by Wyoming residents, the promotion of a kind of tourism that would be profitable and would not damage the ecology, and perhaps more effective interstate relationships that would allow more effective sharing of resources.

In general, Wyoming's people are not in charge of their future as much as they would like to be. Neither agriculture nor ranching can provide much more diversification of economic resources, while some chemical products have significant promise. Tourism is the only current source of economic diversity, and it does provide a base to build upon.